



EXCURSION
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CITY HISTORY CLUB
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BY

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No. II—GREENWICH VILLAGE AND LISPENARD'S
MEADOWS.

(Second Revision, 1906.)

(15th Street to Chambers Street, West of Broadway).



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The City History Club of New York was founded in 1896, one object being to awaken interest in the traditions of the City. To that end a series of historical excursions was planned which, from time to time, it has been found necessary to revise in order (1) to correct blunders due to misinformation, of which even standard books on New York history are full; (2) to keep pace with the march of improvements whereby the topography of the City is constantly changing; and (3) to add material as new light is shed on the past and as new tablets and monuments are erected to mark historic sites.

Interest in City history *has* been awakened since the organization of the Club, and many writers have devoted their time to research and description of life in old New York. The following books will be most helpful to those beginning the study of local history: Todd's "Story of New York" (Putnam); Goodwin's "Historic New York," two bound volumes composed of 24 monographs, "The Half Moon Series," which may be purchased separately; of these: "Old Greenwich," "Annetje Jans' Farm" and "Old Wells and Water Courses" are of particular value for this Excursion (Putnam); Hemstreet's "Literary Landmarks of New York" (Putnam); Janvier's "In Old New York," including chapters on "Greenwich Village" and "Lispenard's Meadows" (Harper); Hemstreet's "Nooks and Corners of Old New York"; "When Old New York Was Young," particularly chapters on "Greenwich Village and the Mouse-Trap," and "The Inland Road to Greenwich" (Scribner); Innes' "New Amsterdam and Its People" (Scribner); Ulmann's "Landmark History of New York" (Appleton); R. R. Wilson's "New York Old and New" (Lippincott); reproductions of noted historical maps and pictures of Old New York (Dunreath Publishing Co., 46 Wall St.). August R. Ohman, 97-101 Warren St., publishes the best modern maps of New York. See also the list of Club publications on page 16.

The Club Plan of the English Period would aid in locating old roads and the shore line.

The N. Y. Historical Society is about to publish an interesting illustrated series of lectures by members on "The Old Villages of Manhattan."

The City History Club would greatly appreciate corrections and additions to the points covered in this excursion, especially if authorities are quoted. As a rule only *existing landmarks* are mentioned.

Object.—"The City History Club has for its object the study of the history of the City of New York, in the hope of awakening an interest in its traditions and in the possibilities of its future, such educational work being for the improvement, uplifting and civic betterment of the community."

INTRODUCTION.

A. Greenwich Village contains the oldest settlement of white men on Manhattan after that formed around Fort Amsterdam. Its boundaries are, roughly, the North River, West 14th Street and the line of the Minetta Brook (the east branch of which rose in Madison Square, crossed Washington Square, ran through the line of Minetta and Downing Streets, and flowed into the North River just north of Charlton Street).

The original Greenwich was, however, of much smaller compass, consisting of a few houses located near the old Indian village of **Sappokanican**, where Gansevoort Market is now located. It was later called the **Bossen Bouwerie** (Farm in the Woods), where in 1633, Gov. Van Twiller established a tobacco plantation often called by its old Indian name. Because of its healthfulness and fertility, it was a popular place of settlement. It received the name of Greenwich in the early part of the eighteenth century. Among the early residents of prominence were Captain, later Admiral, Sir Peter Warren, Oliver De Lancey (Warren's brother-in-law), Commissary Mortier, William Bayard, James Jauncey and George Clinton.

During the early part of the nineteenth century this section of the city became a refuge from the plagues of yellow fever and cholera, and was rapidly built up.

The dovetailing of the new city plan of 1807-11 on the old line of streets in Greenwich Village gave rise to some curious complications, such as the crossing of 10th and 11th Streets by 4th Street, etc. This new plan, together with changes about Washington Square, brought Greenwich into closer union with the rest of the city, although its individuality is still very marked. It is often called the "Old Ninth" or the "American Ward."

The original *shore line* of this section was just west of Greenwich Street, which was a shore road to Greenwich Village, possibly succeeding an old Indian path.

B. The "**Annetje (Anneke) Jans' Farm**," granted in 1635 to Roelof Janssen, consisted of 62 acres lying between the present Warren and Canal Streets, west of Broadway (see map II). Roelof's widow, Annetje, married Dominie Bogardus, whence the later name—the Bogardus Farm or the Dominie's Bouwerie. It was sold to Gov. Lovelace in 1670, confiscated by the Duke of York in 1674, and called successively the Duke's Farm, the King's Farm and the Queen's Farm, until, in 1705, Queen Anne granted it in perpetuity to Trinity Church, when it was called the Church Farm. Most

of it is still Trinity property except the portions ceded by the corporation to the city for streets and St. John's Park. Trinity received other grants north to Christopher Street.

C. **Lispenard's Meadows.**

The Kalch Hoek (Chalkie Hook) was a promontory projecting into a swampy region just east and northeast of the Farm, which was finally drained about 1730 by Anthony Rutgers. His daughter married Leonard Lispenard, whence the names Lispenard's (Lepner's) Meadows, Lispenard and Leonard Streets. A canal, constructed through these meadows on the line of Canal Street, after the City Plan of 1807 was adopted, drained the Collect Pond, which was at Centre Street.

The "Old Jans Farm" of Jans Celes lay north of Canal Street and just beyond was the "Zandtberg" or sand hills, known in English days as "**Richmond Hill.**"

EXCURSION NO. II.

GREENWICH VILLAGE AND LISPENARD'S MEADOWS.

(Second Revision, 1906.)

(First revision corrected with the aid of Thomas J. Burton, Life Member of the New York Historical Society, who has written a paper on "Greenwich Village" to be published by that Society. Second revision corrected with the aid of Miss Sara J. Phillips, Mr. R. I. Raiman and members of the DeWitt Clinton Chapter, C. H. C.)

SECTION I. EARLY GREENWICH.

(The figures refer to Map I, p. 14.)

Start at West 14th Street and 10th Avenue ; walk south.

(1.) **Gansevoort Market**: Site of Sappokanican ("carrying place"), the Indian village where Hudson is supposed to have anchored in 1609, and of Van Twiller's "Bossen Bouwerie," later called Greenwich Village (see Introduction). Fort Gansevoort was built in this vicinity to protect the river front during the War of 1812; it was torn down in 1851. See the "Sign of the Goose" facing Gansevoort ("Goose") Market at No. 819 Washington Street.

(2.) **West Washington Market** was moved here from Vesey Street (Excursion I, 23.)

The old Oyster Market lies along the river front just west.

Go up Horatio Street to Jackson Square.

Pass old houses at **35, 19-13** and **7 Horatio Street** and **342 West 4th Street**.

(3.) **At 126 Greenwich Ave.**, opposite Jackson Square, see C. H. Britting's large and unique collection of theatre posters, programs, etc., dating back to 1805.

Go down 8th Avenue to Abingdon Square.

(82 Jane Street is the site of William Bayard's house in which Alexander Hamilton died.)

(4.) **Abingdon Square** was named for the Countess of Abingdon, Admiral Warren's daughter.

The **Warren Estate** embraced much of the land in this vicinity. The site of the Warren House (home of Admiral Sir Peter Warren who aided in the capture of Louisbourg in 1845) was on the block bounded by West 4th, Charles, Bleecker and Perry Streets.

Christopher Street was called "Skinner Road" for one of Sir Peter Warren's sons-in-law.

100 yards east of 8th Avenue was the original "Fitzroy Road," named for another son-in-law, Lord Fitzroy, created in 1780 Baron Southampton. Gansevoort Street was once called "Southampton" or "Great Kill (Kiln) Road."

(For the original lines and existing traces of these roads see Excursion V, Section III A.)

See "**The Barracks**," a building at the southeast corner of Bank and Bleecker Streets, the upper part being the original prison for sailors taken from the captured British man-of-war "Peacock" during the War of 1812 (for brief account see framed clippings in the saloon.)

Go west on Bank to West Street.

Bank Street was so called from the banks located here during the yellow fever epidemic of 1799.

(5.) **Tablet** on west side of West Street in front of Piers 49-50, marking the widening and general improvement of West Street in 1897.

Go down West to West 10th Street.

(6.) Site of **1st New York State Prison** (near foot of West 10th Street), built in 1796; removed to Sing Sing 1829; the foundation stones are incorporated in the walls of the brewery now occupying the site (just inside and east of the 10th Street driveway). In 1811 "Greenwich Hotel" was on Greenwich Street near the prison; stages went from this point to the City Hall on Wall Street five times a day.

On November 4, 1825, the Erie procession stopped at the dock near the Prison, where it was met by the city officials and escorted to the Navy Yard, where national officials were taken on board and the fleet proceeded to the Lower Bay, where was performed the ceremony of wedding the lakes with the sea. Log rafts were formerly anchored off shore, and a market was located here in 1804.

(7.) **Old houses on Weehawken Street**, possibly built before 1767 (see Ratzen Map). One of the houses was once the station of the N. Y. C. and H. R. R. The N. Y. & N. J. R. R. Co.'s Tunnel emerges from the river near this point.

Go east on West 10th Street.

See old houses at **248** (rear alley), **246**, **238** and **236 West 10th Street**.

Go back to Hudson Street and south to Grove Street.

(8.) **St. Luke's** (a chapel of Trinity) was built here 1821-24 (see **tablet**): the building next door to the old chapel was a Home for Aged Couples, now at West 112th Street.

(9.) The old **Grove Street School** (P. S. No. 3) is the third oldest public school in New York. It was destroyed by fire in 1905. It is proposed to mark the new building with a **tablet** (the gift of C. R. Lamb, one of the "old boys") to commemorate Lafayette's visit in 1824 to the original school on this site.

Grove Street ("called successively Cozine," "Columbia," "Burrows") was widened and partly straightened in 1836.

Go east on Barrow and Commerce Streets to Bedford Street.

The **Broderick House** is at the southwest corner of Barrow and Commerce Street.

Washington Irving's sister lived at **15 Commerce Street**.

Go down Bedford to Morton Street.

(10.) The **Old Bedford Street M. E. Church**, corner of Morton Street, was founded in a carpenter shop nearby in 1805; the original church was built in 1810 and rebuilt on the same site in 1840.

Note several old buildings near by on Bedford and Morton Streets.

Go west on Morton to Washington Street.

(11.) **95 Morton Street** is the former country house of General Morton, opposite which was Mr. Williamson's garden mentioned in Washington's diary.

See several other old houses in the vicinity.

Go back to Hudson Street and South to—

(12.) **Hudson Park**, occupying the site of St. John's Cemetery, which was converted into a park (formerly called St. John's) in 1898. See the **Firemen's Monument** and **tablets**; the pool and fountain are in the French-Italian style of the 17th Century.

It is a neighborhood tradition that during the Draft Riots negroes were hung from the lamppost on Clarkson, near Carmine Street.

Cross the Park; go down Varick and east on Downing Street.

See old-style houses at **54, 59 and 61.**

Go south on Varick to Watts Street.

Many **old-style houses** remain on Varick Street, between Charlton and Carmine Streets, on Charlton, Van Dam and Spring Streets, and on Hudson at Watts Street.

The **Zandtberg** or Richmond Hill originally occupied this region (see Map No. III, p. 15). The Indians called this "Ishpatanau," or Bad Hill.

The site of **Richmond Hill Mansion** is on the block bounded by King, McDougal, Charlton and Varick Streets, but the house was finally removed to 34-38 Charlton Street. It was built by Abraham Mortier, Commissary of the British Army in 1760, and occupied by Lord Amherst, Sir William Carleton, Washington (1776), Vice-President Adams (1789) and Aaron Burr; in its last days it was used as a theatre and finally became a road-house.

(13.) The **Spring Street Church** was erected 1835, its predecessor of 1811 having been built of material from the old First Church in Wall Street.

Spring Street (formerly Brannon Street) was so called from the natural well which was the scene of an early tragedy. In 1755 **Brannon Garden** occupied the corner at Spring and Hudson Streets, the neighborhood being known as **Lower Greenwich.**

Go east on Watts Street to W. Broadway.

(14.) **St. Alphonsus Church**, 312 West Broadway (formerly Laurens Street), on the site of the Lafayette Amphitheatre, built in 1826 and named in honor of Lafayette's second visit to America. Here was held the grand celebration ball of the Erie Canal opening.

SECTION II. LISPENARD'S MEADOWS AND POINTS SOUTH OF CANAL STREET.

Start at Canal Street and Broadway and walk west to Varick Street.

Canal Street, line of the canal draining the Collect Pond. The sewer now carries the drainage of the original springs in the middle of the Island. A stone bridge crossed the canal at Broadway. See **old houses** on the triangular block bounded by Canal, Laight and Varick Streets.

The small park at West and Canal Streets was once called "Suicide Slip."

For an account of Lispenard's Meadows and their drainage see the Introduction and Janvier's "In Old New York."

(15.) **St. John's Chapel**, on Varick Street, built 1803-7, called "St. John's in the Fields," was once the center of a fashionable neighborhood. The key of the chapel may be obtained from the sexton at the house on the south. The galleries, columns and pulpit are original. The bell, clock and iron fence were brought from London. On Saturday morning one may see the dispensing of the "Leake Dole of bread," established in 1800. St. John's is the fourth oldest church edifice yet standing in Manhattan being antedated by St. Paul's Chapel (1764-6), St. Mark's (1795-9) and the Abyssinian Church in Waverly Place (see p. 12).

See quaint old **St. John's Lane** and **York Street**, behind the church.

Go west on Laight to West Street.

(16.) The N. Y. C. & H. R. R. R. Freight Station, site of **St. John's Park**, laid out as a private park in 1821 and sold to the Hudson River R. R. for a freight station about 1865. Around the park lived Alexander Hamilton, General Schuyler and other prominent citizens.

See the **commemorative pediment** in the Hudson Street front of the freight station.

Site of **Washington's Landing** in 1775, on West Street, south of Laight Street, formerly marked by a bronze tablet.

Go down West to Beach Street and east to W. Broadway.

The **North Fort**, erected during the War of 1812, was located at the foot of Hubert Street.

(17.) **Home of John Ericsson** at 36 Beach Street. On the roof may be seen a small house, where he experimented.

(18.) The small triangular **Park at Beach Street** and West Broadway is a green reminder of the **Annetje Jans Farm** (Introduction).

Go south on W. Broadway and east on Thomas Street to Broadway.

(19.) The **factory** at 139-141 Franklin Street was originally a church, built in 1823.

The **Rutger's Mansion** was at Thomas Street and Broadway, and about the middle of the Eighteenth Century became the center of Ranelagh Garden. The New York Hospital, completed 1775, occupied about the same site.

SECTION III. WASHINGTON SQUARE AND VICINITY.

Go down 5th Avenue from West 14th Street.

(20.) The "**Old First**" Presbyterian Church at W. 12th Street, successor to the church on Wall Street. See **tablet**.

(21.) **Washington Square**: Potter's Field 1789-1823; made a park in 1827 and improved in 1870-1871. **Washington Arch** erected 1889, to commemorate the anniversary of Washington's inauguration.

New York University (Washington Square East), former building erected 1830, scene of Stone Cutters' riot and inventions of Morse and Draper; gave name to University Place.

See **statues of Garibaldi and Holley**.

Art Street (Astor Place) and Monument Lane (named for an obelisk to the memory of Gen. Wolfe, hero of Quebec, 1759, erected at a point near 15th Street and 8th Avenue), now Greenwich Avenue, met just north of Washington Square. These streets are the only remaining parts of the "Inland Road to Greenwich," connecting it with the Bowery. The Greenwich Ave. portion was the line of retreat of Sullivan's Brigade and Knox's Artillery, September 15, 1776, Aaron Burr being the guide.

Note difference in the method of laying out and designating the streets north and south of Washington Square.

Go down Sullivan and west on W. 3d Street.

(22.) **St. Clement's Church**, at 108 West 3d St., contains an organ built for St. John's in 1814. It was captured by the British and ransomed for \$2,000. In 1851 it was rebuilt and placed here.

See old house at the rear of **133 W. 3d St.**

Go down 6th Avenue, and Minetta Lane and Street.

(23.) **Minetta Lane and Street**, irregular in plan; through the latter once ran **Minetta** (Manetta) **Water** or Brook, called "Bestavaar's Killelje" (grandfather's little kill) in Dutch days (see Introduction and Excursion V, Map No. I).

The cottages in Cottage Place (Hancock Street) have all given way to tall tenements.

Go west on Bleecker to Christopher Street.

(24.) **Home of Tom Paine**, at 309 (some say 293) Bleecker Street, where he lived with Mme. Bonneville. He died at the site of 59 Grove

Street. Barrow Street was called Reason Street (later "Raisin Street") in honor of Paine's "Age of Reason" by the commissioners who designed the City Plan of 1807.

(25.) **The Commissioners' Office** was at the north-east corner of Bleecker and Christopher Streets. The old building has been raised one story (See *Mail and Express*, March 3, 1901).

Go east on Christopher Street to W. Washington Place.

(26.) **St. John's Lutheran Church**, at 81 Christopher Street, was built 1821 as the Eighth Presbyterian Church.

The site of the Spencer Mansion is at the east side of West 4th, near West 10th Street; it was used in 1822 as a city post office during the yellow fever period.

West 4th Street was called Asylum Street, as the New York Orphan Asylum was established here.

Bleecker Street was originally named Herring Street for the old Herring Farm in the vicinity.

See old house at **135 W. Washington Place** facing Sheridan Square.

(27.) **Christopher Street Park**: The **Northern Dispensary**, instituted 1827, was built in 1831; see **tablet**.

The Abyssinian Church opposite on Waverly Place was built in 1803 at the corner of Amos (West 10th Street) and Herring Street as the Greenwich Dutch Reformed Church, and is the third oldest church edifice now standing in Manhattan. The Reformed Presbyterians bought it in 1826 and removed it to its present location. It is soon to be demolished.

(28.) The houses at **11 Christopher Street**, opposite Gay Street, were occupied one hundred years ago by Scotch weavers whose gardens, ran down to Greenwich Avenue.

(29.) **Jefferson Market** ("New Greenwich Market"): market, court prison; home of **Exempt Firemen's Organization** (entrance at No. 10 on the Greenwich Avenue side), in whose rooms may be seen a very interesting exhibit of old fire apparatus, pictures, etc. (Visitors welcome). The site of the market was originally a pond.

See old houses at **129-131 West 10th Street**, covered with wistaria vines.

Go north on 6th Avenue.

(30.) **Milligan Place**, formerly Milligan's Lane, connecting Amos (W. 10th) Street with the Union Road (between 10th and 11th Streets).

Note the slant of the building on the north, marking the original direction of the Lane.

At **33 West 11th Street** the rear building marks the line of the old Union Road joining Skinner Road (Christopher Street) and Southampton Road (Gansevoort Street); see the old cistern and chimney. The walls of **28-36 West 13th Street** and **43-45 West 12th Street** mark the line of the Union Road (see Excursion V, 5).

(31.) The old "**Grapevine**" (6th Avenue and W. 11th Street), was once a popular roadhouse on the old Union Road.

(32.) The second "**Beth Haim**" (House of Rest), a Jewish Cemetery, was established here 1804-5 (the early cemetery being still visible at Oliver Street and New Bowery; see Excursion III). It was used as a burial place for strangers, but became the regular cemetery of the congregation in 1822. In 1829, 11th Street east of 6th Avenue was opened by the City Commissioners, encroaching largely on the cemetery, whereupon a third site was purchased in 1830 at the southwest corner of 6th Avenue and 21st Street (see Excursion V, 22).

11th Street, west of 6th Avenue, had been in existence as Hammond Street. A number of the old houses with high stoops and front yards still remain on the south side of the street.

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